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THE GENIUS AND POSTURE OF AMERICA.

AN

# ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE THE CITIZENS OF BOSTON,

JULY 4, 1857,

BY

WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER.



BOSTON:

J. E. FARWELL AND COMPANY, PRINTERS TO THE CITY,

37 CONGRESS STREET.

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CITY OF BOSTON.

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*In Common Council*, Nov. 17, 1864.

ORDERED: That the thanks of the City Council be presented to the Rev. William R. Alger for the Oration delivered by him to the municipal authorities on the celebration of the Declaration of American Independence, July 4, 1857, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Sent up for concurrence.

GEORGE S. HALE, *President*.

*In Board of Aldermen*, Nov. 21, 1864.

Concurred.

OTIS NORCROSS, *Chairman*.

Approved Nov. 22, 1864.

F. W. LINCOLN, JR., *Mayor*.

A true copy.

Attest:

S. F. McCLEARY, *City Clerk*.

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BOSTON, Nov. 25, 1864.

*To the Common Council and Board of Aldermen:—*

GENTLEMEN: Gratefully acknowledging the honor of your vote, I herewith, in accordance with your request, send a copy of the Oration which, at the invitation of the City Authorities, I pronounced on the Fourth of July in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-seven.

Very respectfully, your fellow-citizen,

WILLIAM R. ALGER.

At the very outset their property sunk to half its value, and the whole trembled on a desperate risk. At every turn the penalty of high treason — the black gibbet with its ghastly cord, the deathman's block and axe — gloomed in their imaginations. With each successive step, for a long time, their embarrassments and hardships grew heavier, discouragements flocked upon them, pitfalls lurked athwart their way, and deepening darkness covered the close. Still they yielded not; but with wills like adamant, faith like inspiration, and self-sacrifice like martyrdom, they bore up the burden of the land, cheered the faint-hearted, and maintained their cause until a brighter day. If we could in imagination reproduce their circumstances, and place ourselves in their situation, and see what spirit and nerve it required calmly to confront, as a helpless handful of them did on the church-green, the minions of tyranny who coldly shot them down, their blood staining the April swords for many a hundred springs to come,— without experience or discipline unflinchingly to face the serried and blazing ranks of the most veteran soldiery in the world, as they did in the sun of Bunker Hill, with no weapons but their clubbed muskets, and no defence but their farmers' frocks over their beating bosoms,— to stand by the cause with incorruptible integrity and irrepressible hope when staggering bribes beset them in field and forum, when traitors swaggered

in the camp and tories swarmed in the town, and when the overwhelming forces of the foe, flushed with victory, drove them at every passage,— still, to hold unfalteringly by their holy purpose, with no end but duty and no motive but freedom, vanquishing the temptations which must have assailed them when, defeated, neglected, disheartened, their numbers fearfully thinned by battle, disease, and hardship, hunger reduced them to the gaunt verge of starvation, the winter's cold benumbed their emaciated limbs, and they reddened the snow over which they walked with their bare and bleeding feet ;— if by mental experience of this we were able for a moment actually to feel the merit implied in undergoing what they underwent, daring and struggling as they dared and struggled, and accomplishing at last what they finally accomplished, we could not help setting their names on high, and often reverting to read their story with thrills of admiration. And when we thought, in addition, of the illimitable benefits resulting from what they did, we could not help celebrating their memories with perennial praises. “Yea,” we should exclaim, “so often as the anniversary of their triumphant crisis rolls round, let the jubilant bells peal, and the thunderous cannon boom, and the gay flags flutter, and the people's jocund shouts greet the sun as he mounts in the morning : let the voices of eloquent orators, and the chanting of hymns, and the

thrilling blasts of martial music, and every sort of rejoicing, all over the land, freight the air at noon, while the statues of departed heroes and statesmen are set up amidst acclamations, and emulous purposes are kindled in fresh aspirants, and groups of young men in athletic sports form living pictures on grass and stream, and innocent children with flowers and mottoes move in procession through the streets; and, when night falls, let illuminations and pyrotechnics put out the stars! Let all this be done, for it is right and well!" we should say.

Fortunately for us, and for the world, their fidelity needed not the prophetic incentive of posthumous honors. They were of that stuff heroes are made of; and, enduring all things, hoping all things, they clung to their original objects till the stormy and disastrous night of their feebleness rolled away, and the morning light of promise broke, and successive triumphs followed, and independence rose upon the land where, in the foreground, two groups reflected its earliest lustre in the adoption of the Constitution and the inauguration of Washington. They lived — the most of them — to see their desperate enterprise crowned with complete success. And afterwards, year by year, as long as they lived, they saw more than the fulfilment of more than their most brilliant expectations. And when, attended by the benedictions of their coun-



try, they went to the house appointed for all the living, they were comforted with the reflection that they had fought a good fight, and should leave their children an unparalleled heritage.

Rapidly, too rapidly, the years have fled, and the gray revolutionary sires are nearly all gone. Only a few now linger, here and there, time-hallowed memorials of other days and of other men. Only a few scattered and tremulous stalks are left in the great field that has been reaped and garnered by death. Soon none at all will be left. Well, they will sleep in honored dust. The historian and the poet shall hand down their fame. As long as time endures, with this returning day their story shall be recalled, and votive wreaths be freshly twined around their names. Pious hands and fond hearts shall guard and deck their graves, and keep their monuments whole, and their memories green. This is little, but it is all they ask, and all that we can give. Shall we ever fail to grant it? No, not until we forget that while they are resting beyond the touch of mortal feeling, the comforts we enjoy are the lineal fruits of what was willingly purchased for us by them at the price of their prayers, toils, tears, and blood. Peaceful, then, be the slumbers of those who have fallen on sleep. "Dying, they have but exchanged their country's arms for their country's heart," wherein they shall live forever. Long may the survivors be spared to enjoy

the public prosperity, and to read their reward in a grateful nation's eyes! And when at length all shall have gone, — when the whole country, amidst the mighty dirge of a people's grief, shall have poured its tears around the fresh grave of the last one,— green be the turf above them, and hallowed the spots where they lie. Let the feet of happy children tread lightly there, and there the pilgrim patriot pause as he passes, to invoke a blessing on their souls, and breathe a prayer for the land they served so well.

Our distinct National existence began with the flinging forth of the daring and lofty manifesto known throughout the world as the American Declaration of Independence. We observe to-day the eighty-first anniversary of that proclamation. The theme best fitting such an occasion is obviously the characteristic privileges, duties, and dangers of the country. To the treatment of that theme one reluctant word must form the introduction. Every honest patriot who this day speaks the praises of America must first confess — though it be wrung from him in shame and anguish — that so far as slavery extends its dismal anomaly over our soil, it is an unmitigated contradiction to his boasts. Where this wedded misfortune and sin exists, and while it lasts, our picturesque displays fade out in sable groups of woe, weary coffles, and sundered families; and the pæans

of the platform die away in the wails of the plantation. But slavery is not *properly* any part of our National Government, — not an element in our organic life, but a sectional disease, a temporary excrescence. It is rightfully no more a part of our country than a snake's nest is a part of a granite cliff. The Free States alone fairly represent the true genius and historic posture of the Republic.

With the exception now stated, let us see in what particulars we, as a people, are favored beyond the subjects of other nations. It will be useful to answer this question with distinct thoughts and feelings. For then we shall understand definitely what we have to be thankful for, to cherish, and to guard.

First among our national advantages is to be reckoned an organized political equality. No unjust and irritating favoritisms are interwrought with the order of our habits and the substance of our institutions. Among us is no legal distinction between peer and peasant, prelate and mechanic; but before the laws of the land, and before the possibilities of life, all are politically equal. In the fixed and wonted enjoyment of this great right we have but the faintest conception of its importance, and of the bitter grievances imposed on those who are deprived of it. What should we think if compelled to submit, as so many still are, to the law of primogeniture, by which

nearly all the wealth of a family goes to the eldest male descendant, leaving the others dependent, and introducing, without a reason, the cruelest inequalities of social standing and public opportunity even among members of the same household? How should we feel if a large class, with no claim but ancient prescription, covered with hereditary titles and honors, should lord it over the mass of the people, making thousands, far their superiors in every attribute of real greatness, cringe at their bidding? What should we say if a set of men were born to be our rulers, whether fit or unfit, and if the chief offices of authority and emolument among us were filled by the incompetent favorites of pompous dignitaries, without consulting us in the least? The trial would be greater than we could bear. Heaven be thanked that we can choose our own men for our own offices; that with us the condition of rank and glory is not the accident of family descent, but the possession of personal merit; that there are here no impassable limits of caste, and hedges of prerogative; that with us the incentives to effort are diffused, and the doors of preferment are open to all, leaving every poor man's boy free to rise in proportion to his genius, virtue, and labor, even till they bear him to the chief throne in the Nation. This republican equality of all classes, and universal accessibleness of honors, is a glorious

thing, that we do not think enough of, and cannot prize too highly.

The next prominent ingredient in the happiness of our people, is the enjoyment of untrammelled speech and printing. We write, talk, and publish without the galling interference of a despotic censorship. The press is free on these shores, however broadly it shines or threateningly it fulminates. There is no dictating official clique here, armed with absolute power by the Government, to whom every author must submit his book before he dares to publish it, and at whose condemnation it must be instantly suppressed. No; our poets freely breathe forth the sentiments of their souls,—our historians and essayists discuss their subjects as they please,—our novelists write tales with what moral they choose,—our reviewers criticize books, men, and measures, according to their consciences or their fancies,—our wildest reformers scatter their fierce invectives and appeals in every mode and quantity,—and none of them has the slightest fear of a spy or an arrest. God made the heart and the intellect free, and consistent republicanism leaves the lips without a padlock, and the press without a hinderance, trusting that preponderant common sense and right feeling will, in the long run, evolve the best results from full, unmolested argument. But it is not left so everywhere.

There are countries where sleepless, heartless tyranny, made cowardly and cruel by its peril, watches to suppress free thought, and to tread out the generous sparkles of its ashes. Official informers, paid and fed for the purpose, prying in every corner, snuff the first breath of heresy, catch the first whisper of liberty, and straightway the word goes forth from the priestly and political censors;—the press of the printer is confiscated, the editors are fined and degraded from their post, the authors go to the dungeon or into banishment. How galling such dictation must be to men of genius, compelled, on peril of every comfort, perchance of life itself, to hold down the words which burn for utterance, and which every honest thought and noble impulse tell them to shout aloud to heaven and earth! Can we be half grateful enough that we are free to say and print, on any subject, what we believe is true and ought to be proclaimed, with no dread of despotic supervision or judicial penalties?

The third benefit we owe to our American form of government, is theological freedom, an escape from religious disabilities, and hierarchical tyranny. Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, Orthodox and Heterodox, — all possess the same unrestricted rights and immunities, all alike are eligible to every elective office; equal facility of access to every source of education, business, and preferment, is afforded to all.

In other ages it was not so. In other lands now it is not so. Even in free and favored England, bigoted religious proscriptions weigh on the whole realm, from the monarch—who must be a sworn Episcopalian, and whose conscientious avowal of a different opinion would convulse the empire, and perhaps cause a discrownal—to the peasant, who, if a Dissenter, finds the national colleges shut from him, the appointing power of the State, the dread influence of the Church, and the vast patronage of the nobility, frowning upon him, and closing every door of privilege against him. The temptations to falsify his genuine convictions are thus brought to bear terribly on every gifted and ambitious man, and it is notorious that many of the ablest men in the Establishment, for the sake of retaining their places, sign articles which they both disbelieve and loathe! What are a man's chances of executive recognition and preferment if he be a Dissenter? Though his eloquence shake forum and temple, and his genius illumine the earth, and his virtues awaken the admiring love of men, yet shall the government and its lackeys sneer at him and overlook him, and—unless the people defiantly lift him on their throbbing heart to a level face to face with earls and dukes—he shall remain in neglected obscurity, while supple mediocrity, by conforming to the orthodox statutes, rises from station to station, receives title after title, and rolls

through princely parks in the envied wealth and pomp of a state-minister, or flaunts its bloated luxury in metropolitan sees. Such a state of things arouses the indignation of the good, ruins the souls of the weak, disturbs the religious peace, and corrupts the moral health of the kingdom. In this respect how favored we are! Every person may follow and avow his real religious preferences without any public disability or social injury, according to the provisions of the Constitution and the hearted customs of the people. So ought it to be. What a man shall believe, as he lives in this solemn universe, is a sacred thing between him and his God. No tampering of bribes and threats should ever be suffered to interfere with it. The deliberate organization of such an influence is a gigantic outrage, so old and so common on the earth that we ought to rejoice heartily at being free from it.

Fourthly, we enjoy in this country a whole class of priceless privileges which may be comprised under the general description of exemption from all those enormous, unrighteous, vampire burdens of accumulated debt, war establishments, feudal laws, tythings, brooding antiquity and fear, which crush the over-crowded populations of the old world to the earth, and drain out the energy of their life-blood. From the intolerable load of these transmitted and growing ills we are delivered. A form of government marvellously



cheap, nearly all the business being transacted by the people themselves in their primary town meetings, at small expense of time, and less of money,—makes our taxation light. We are neither goaded by the arrogant whims, and ruled by the selfish policy of an autocrat, nor insulted with the mockery of a royal family on whom we are obliged to lavish millions a year, for no service they render, but simply that they may honor us by living in magnificence, and riding in state, being guarded by bayonets, and gazed at by gaping crowds! No interest on immense debts unjustly incurred ages ago, bearing only the fruit of blood, wretchedness, and starvation,—no swollen salaries paid to locust hordes of useless officials,—no priestly tythes enforced whether we will or not, wring away the honest earnings of our independent laborers; but a simple, self-ruling democracy, peace and plenty, the common school, the open church, and all the natural rights of the individual, un-infringed, make them happy and contented. In this refulgent summer day, as they pause, leaning on their scythes, and wipe the sweat from their brows, and look around on the teeming fields, to be distrained by no cormorant landlords; or as they quaff refreshment from the mossy old bucket poised on the well-curb,—deeply should they sympathize with the suffering peasantry of other lands, and bless the unrivalled institutions of their own.

Unlike some nations, where a mob in a single city has repeatedly built and unbuilt the entire government in twenty-four hours, we are not at the mercy of local excitements. The safe and extended stability of our country is such that before one of these surprising effervescences can spread far enough for serious alarm, it cools and dies. Therefore we are not afraid of sudden explosion and revolutionary overthrow. Our Government has an expansiveness, a flexibility, a recuperative power, that mock at such fears. No legitimate evil can reach a really dangerous pitch before the popular election may redress it. When winter comes, the snowflakes gently descend, and clothe the fields with a garment of freshness, hiding the filth of decay, and the ruggedness of the rocks; so, without difficulty or turmoil, when the majority wish it, the ballots of this free people fall, and spread a new law over society, beneath which the ugliness of wrong and the noise of contention disappear. In the old world countries, the antiquated customs, dead traditions, burdensome rules of bygone ages, still cramp the minds and hearts of men, as the crushing armor of those times would their bodies if they now wore it. With us no such things remain. We have thrown them away, never more to shackle with the iron bigotries of the past the buoyant movements of our free spirits. Here, on this young Western strand, exempt from

the ills that curse and paralyze other nations, bidding a frank good by to the wornout things of old, we have taken possession of a new country, victoriously fought a new battle, and founded new institutions, and are now training ourselves up, a newly commingled people, who, animated with new plans and faith, the morning sunlight of heaven's guiding favor on their foreheads, and the great clock of time striking a new hour in the affairs of mankind, shall press forward to new destinies, resplendent with unimagined boons of freedom and love.

In view of the fact that we are enjoying such glorious advantages, what is the true mission of America? Evidently it is to preserve, increase, and perpetuate these blessings here, and to try to secure them elsewhere. The work providentially brought before this people, in the line of the testamentary ages and experimenting nations, plainly is the organization of political and social liberty in just and beneficent institutions. And how clear it is that to do that well, and establish the perfect result firmly, setting its grand and shining success on high before the unimpeded gaze of mankind in such unstained brightness and towering eminence that purblind tyrants shall own that they see it, and lynx-eyed critics confess that they discern no flaw in it,—is the way to do the utmost good for the other nations of the earth! Regarding

this point as admitted,—namely, that the mission of our country, both for her own lasting salvation and for the redemption of her groaning brother-lands, is to achieve, and enthrone in dazzling exhibition to the world, a national example of political perfection,—the most important part of our theme at once opens upon us. The question, charged with those grave considerations which ought to occupy the attention of every citizen, irresistibly rises,—What are our immediate duties as constituents of the Representative Republic of the world?

The indispensable work, reaching through the whole scale of our obligations, is to secure *national righteousness at home*. In the first place this is the most immediate requisition of morality. The essential thing for a man or for a nation to do is to put away vices, and cultivate virtues. This is the eternal claim whose light and sanction no one can avoid seeing and feeling, whether he obeys it or not. We as a people are bound to strive with banded earnestness to purify the land from every removable iniquity, and fill it with all attainable righteousness: because by the terms this is the very meaning of the word *duty*, the vitality of the moral law. If an individual who was cruel and selfish in his family, careless and fraudulent in his business, should go about urging the claims of domestic love and mercantile integrity, every one

would say that he had perversely mistaken his vocation, that his real duty was to reduce right principles to practice in his own sphere. So with a nation: its first obligation, its very function, is to organize justice, freedom, and beneficence in its own laws of life; to plant liberty on its public hills, joy in its private valleys, holiness in its courts, and mercy in its highways. The nation that recklessly disregards that, tramples on the elements of ethics, insults mankind, and defies God. A genuine patriotism will, therefore, labor to destroy the wrong and build up the right in its country, for the same reason that a pure and undefiled religion visits the afflicted, and keeps itself unspotted from the world: namely, that that is the very essence of its being.

But, secondly, we must endeavor to establish national righteousness at home, because that is the only possible way of securing permanent success and prosperity. Without internal holiness — conformity to that rule of right which is the will of God, in its institutions, laws, character, and conduct — no nation can long stand. Every reality of things and of morals is unchangeably leagued and invisibly arrayed against it. Every omen is sombre, the perilous portents of retribution swarm around, and the day of downfall moves fatally on. Crime inevitably breeds trouble. Sin is necessarily cumulative and destructive, like an

obstructed river. Injustice is essentially disorganizing and revolutionary. It is the nature of evil that it cannot stay quiet, but must work, and grow worse, spreading and dilating till it snatches the flash of revelation and shudders with the bolt of judgment. Let a palpable wrong be in the working machinery of the State, and, if it be suffered to continue, it will produce friction, interference, extending disorder, till all is stopped in a general crash. Wherever there is, in the political fabric of society, an organized, unnecessary evil of any kind, it infallibly provokes hostility, awakens dissension, and causes deepening danger and alarm, till it is removed. Those whose moral convictions it offends, must protest and strike against it. Those whose interests it injures, will be indignant towards it. Those whose selfishness it subserves and whose prejudices it pleases, with reckless fierceness will seek to uphold it. And so all passions are enlisted, and the debate gets loud, and animosities are inflamed, and plots and counterplots are laid. Meanwhile, if it be an actual wrong, and be forcibly maintained, the elements of explosion are mustering and muttering, and at last break out in the lurid upheaval of mobs, insurrection, and mutual terror, — to result, perchance, in successful revolution, perchance in suppressal by a heavier despotism, perchance in cure, or, perchance, in utter ruin. History reads us many a dread lesson of this sort.

The dead nations whose giant skeletons now lie bleaching and crumbling on the sands of time, all died of sin. It was their crimes that dug their graves and pushed them in. Licentious luxury sapped the strength and rotted the virtue of one, — and it disappeared beneath the green pool of its own corruption. Brutal war, made a business of, and carried in every direction, drew upon another the wrath of the world, — and it was dashed on the rock of its own barbarous force. Domestic bondage, grown enormous, trodden under foot, and goaded to madness, rose on another, — and buried it in the conflagration and slaughter of its own provocation. Internal antipathy, based on sectional differences, fed by selfish interest and taunting debate, finally exploded in the quarrelling parties of another, — and hurled its dissevered fragments to ruin by the convulsive eruption of its own wrong and hatred. Of all the empires whose melancholy ghosts now pace the margin of oblivion, not one ever sunk but its fall was caused by internal iniquity in some way or other. Shall the stately shade of republican America, too, go down to join the doleful company of crowned spectres, moving them beneath to rise up at her coming with the sardonic mock, “Art thou also become as we?” If we would avoid their doom of vengeance we must not tread their path of guilt.

In complete opposition to this nature and effect of wickedness, righteousness in a nation's politics and dwellings has a vivifying power, an assimilating and preservative tendency. The people whose rights are equally secured to them all, whose interests are well protected, who, free from irritating wrongs and jealousies, may all alike approach the sublime gifts and opportunities of nature and society, can hardly help dwelling in contentment and flourishing in progressive strength. The secret causes of convulsion or decay do not exist there, but all are sympathetically happy,—from the counting-room millionaire, watching his complex web of enterprise, to the hillside ploughboy, whistling an echo to the lark in the clouds,—and their country may well hope to survive forever.

We ought to strive towards this end also because it is the direct way to exert the strongest influence for good upon foreign countries. Indeed, without the realization of internal integrity, we can do very little good abroad. Our example will be so sullied and compromised as almost to be spoiled and powerless. Our brave preaching will be flung back to us with the taunt, "Physician, heal thyself." But let us lift up a front of unmarred holiness above all our hearths and altars,—let there not be a single shackled bondsman in our territory,—let there be an entire consistency between our customs and our glorious professions,—



let us show here a vast land with no lowering military, because peace and safety are so stable; with no sickening almshouses, because there are no paupers to need them; with no dismal prisons, because there are no criminals to require them; bounteous fruits loading the fields, smiling faces lining the streets, the awful and resplendent ægis of righteousness extended firmly over all,—and the spectacle of that spotless Republic would be an omnipotent “*power on earth,*” — would set the gazing nations delirious to imitate it.

The first duty, therefore, of every American, is to cleanse his country from wrong, and to establish impartial righteousness at home. He must lend his aid in every proper method to those reforms which aim to remove human bondage, intemperance, the gallows, and every other legal crime and shameful custom fastened on us in the pagan night of the past; that no more manacled hands and streaming eyes may be upturned, pleading to us for pity and to Heaven for justice; that no more corpses, swinging in the gibbets of our jail-yards, may curdle the blood of Christianized humanity in its veins; that the matted and seething masses of licentiousness and pauperism, abated from their dens, may no more infect and upbraid our civilization. Let this be done, and we shall indeed be blessed within and influential without. Our country will be an impregnable for-

tress, furnished to stand the eternal siege of the elements; and our people, if ever alien hosts should threaten, animated by one resistless impulse, will gather at the landing, and either whip them from the shore, or bury them in the strand.

But if our institutions and conduct are righteous, there will be no occasion for anything of that kind. For, the second emphatic obligation resulting from the American posture is to *preserve national fraternity in its relations abroad*. To such an attitude, unless absolutely driven from it, we are pledged by the historic policy of our wisest men, urged by the force of interest, and bound by the sanctity of right. There may be different opinions upon some particulars touching our duty towards foreign races, but a few points are unmistakably clear. In the first place, we cannot help sympathizing profoundly with the victims of oppression in Italy, Poland, Austria, Hungary, Ireland, and elsewhere. Their children starving, their hands tied, their mouths stopped, their noblest representatives pining in prison, or wandering broken-hearted in exile; — in our favored circumstances to view these facts, and then to withhold all commiseration from the sufferers, and refuse them a welcome here, would be to prove our souls alien from every moral attribute of God, and recreant to every generous fibre of humanity. Exempt here, under the palladium of our

democracy, and in the citadel of our independence, from all the stinging wrongs heaped on the persecuted laborers and patriots of despotic countries, cold and mean is the heart that will not waft them a sigh of sympathy, and offer them a cheerful invitation. Our forefathers meant this land should be an asylum where the hunted exile might come and find shelter and brotherhood. So may it ever be! Let the mighty doors of the West, through which the setting sun rushes in floods of gold and purple, stand open for the longing multitudes to come in. What though they share our plenty and lessen our monopoly? They are our brothers, and their coming diminishes the average wrong and misery of humanity; and, mingling with our republican population, there will be so many happy freemen the more. Ay, let them come, with our hearts' greeting, for we have room enough. Let their axes wake the echoes of the primeval forests, their ploughs and spades encroach on the boundless prairies, and the smoke of their cabins curl to the astonished clouds, in those teeming regions where lonesome Nature yet waits for the ornament and hum of man's companionship.

But this sympathizing reception of the spurned laborers and flying refugees of other lands does not bind our country to be made a common sewer and receptacle for the offscourings of the old world, the empty-

ings of its jails, hulks, almshouses, and hospitals. This indecent outrage has been deliberately inflicted on us too long. Have we not a right to protect ourselves against the ravenous dregs of anarchy and crime, the tainted swarms of pauperism and vice Europe shakes on our shores from her diseased robes? When this naked mass of unkempt and priest-ridden degradation, bruised with abuse, festering with ignorance, inflamed with rancor, elated with blind expectations, has sprung on our continent, and turning round, shakes its offcast fetters and rags in one hand, brandishes sword and torch in the other, its eyeballs glaring vindictive rage upon the governments which have expatriated it,—shall we, without the slightest regard to its preparedness, our own safety, or the peace of the world, give this monstrous multitude instantaneous possession of every political prerogative, letting it storm our ballot-boxes with its drift of mad votes, and fill half our offices with its unnaturalized fanatics? Our own sons serve an apprenticeship to republican institutions before they can throw a ballot or occupy an elective seat. Should not the banished insurgents, the honest immigrants, the unfortunate exiles, who seek a new home here, be willing to undergo a probation in some degree proportionate? Above all, should not that foreign spawn, which, with fierce and idiotic stubbornness, persists in remaining foreign in the midst

of us, keeping alive all its old clannish peculiarities, and refusing to blend itself, by assimilating processes, with our composite and hospitable nationality, — should not this alien horde be compelled to refrain from ruling America until it has become a little Americanized? This should be insisted on, for a few such viperous traitors as those whose incendiary appeals and fiendish curses against their native country have thickened our air ever since they landed, — if admitted to influential public posts among us, might transform the Genius of America, now standing tiptoe on the kindling mountains of the West, a halo on his serene forehead, and a peace-branch in his hand, into a stamping Fury, mustering a fleet of war-ships, and foaming through the sea towards the cliffs of England.

Not only are we to give a friendly reception to those deprived of what we enjoy, considering them as good as ourselves, and entitled to all our privileges just in the degree that they become a part of our nationality; we may, furthermore, utter the earnest expostulation of our public sentiment against the injustice under which they groan in their native countries. But we ought, before doing this, to clear our skirts of the glaring inconsistencies which will provoke retort and rob our appeals of their divine point. And we ought to make our protest in a moral tone, without arrogance or threats. After all, we

shall have to trust for real influence in improving the old world despotisms, to the power of our example. Set before the rulers and their people the example of our exuberant and diffused natural wealth, the rapidity of our unrivalled growth, the self-directing quietude of our prodigious power, our enthusiastic popular patriotism, — set this in significant contrast with their starving poverty, overshadowing alarms, revolutionary outbreaks, compulsory standing armies, general disaffection, and retrogression or paralysis. Let that contrast be seen and felt, and it must work far more mightily than any other agency we can devise.

Let not Americans be deceived with the vain notion that by a propagandist war they could overthrow monarchy and establish republicanism abroad. While the people in despotic countries are unequally pitted against their prescriptive oppressors and need military help from without, obviously the fit time for a forcible change has not come. Any physical interference on our part, upon whatever pretext, would be equally a mistake and a tragedy. There is hardly a government in the Eastern hemisphere which would not, at the first signal of such a thing, join a coalition of crowned heads against us; and after wading in carnage up to our horses' bridles, we should reap only a disastrous discomfiture. I know the specious plea which may

be made, under certain circumstances, in behalf of such an enterprise. I know the attraction with which a generous heart, full of faith and sympathy, will respond to it. The blood must tingle and jump when one of our chivalrous countrymen, in answer to the magic voice of Kossuth, cries, "Unfurl the stars and stripes on the plains of Hungary in front of a hundred thousand American freemen, and then welcome be the armies of perjured Austria to the shock." The soul stirs wildly at the thought. But ah! the Angel of Humanity would hover o'er the death-strown field, and when the night-damp fell, bedew the mangled forms of her children with her tears. Long enough has this sort of experiment been tried; long enough have men sought redemption by battle, rending the nations with hate, and baptizing the new-born children of liberty in blood! Now, let a different course be fully tested. Let us improve the unparalleled opportunity Providence has given us, to try the policy of peace and magnanimous example. From all mortal contests — in the name of righteousness — in the name of humanity — in the name of Christ — in the awful name of God — stand we aloof, henceforth, with clean hands! If our brethren of the old countries cannot gradually win democratic emancipation by ripening steps of reform, but are compelled to snatch the prize with violence, when, at length, the rising regiments of

the populace strike, we shall best keep the laws of wisdom and right, and best subserve the real interests of the world, not by plunging into the murderous struggle, but by tilling our fields and tending our tasks, praying God to preside over the issue which we may not arbitrate, and when the last great tempest of revolution has passed, to span the Eastern firmament with a bright republican bow, like that which soars across our Western.

Under the leading of a manifest destiny, Fate sitting on our helmets, a demoniac audacity possessing our wills, inevitable victory following our march, we have already fought no less than seven wars. First we contended with the jealous Aborigines; secondly with the allied French and Indians; then with the British, first when we were a colony, afterwards when we were an independent nation; next with the pirates of Barbary; then with the despairing Seminoles; and finally with the weak and bewildered Mexicans. Our cannon have volleyed, our banners have flapped, our sabres have dripped, our bugles have sung triumph, from the wigwams of the Pequot and the fortress of Tripoli, to the swamps of Florida and the heights of Monterey. From the death of king Philip to the fall of Vera Cruz, our eagle, with fatal swoop and clutch, has pounced on his quarry, and slowly floated off, gorged and incarnadined. Surely we have done



enough of this bloody business. It is time we were sick of it. We are strong enough not to fight any more. By straightforward justice, conciliating heed, and intelligent industry, we can amply protect ourselves and conquer opposition. Let us now distrust and check the passion for military aggrandizement. For the future, let us swear by our altars, our homes, our thriving villages, our fruitful fields, and the lovely canopy smiling over them, that we will cherish *peace* as the central duty of our posture, and the blesseddest boon of Heaven. However numerous and astonishing our victories in the past, however ascendant our fatalistic star in the present, let us remember it is recorded in holy writ, that sooner or later "*God scatters the people that delight in war.*"

The same extravagant self-estimate, lawless passion, uneasy and audacious vanity, which have been eager for a foreign crusade, have also broken forth in fillibustering expeditions, winning favor from a large class of the population. The fact that such forays, insulting the civilization of the century, have been so powerfully aided, so openly applauded, so generally winked at, is disgraceful and ominous. It reflects infamy on our Government, that an iron hand of suppressal was not promptly laid on these marauding parties. The unprincipled characters, the cruel and treacherous conduct of their leaders, are helping to bring on them

the odium they deserve. The atrocious violation of all law which they directly propose in their predatory programme, is their unmitigated condemnation. The shocking massacres and utter failure which have resulted thus far, check them for the present. But new expeditions are threatened. The very spirit of the enterprise riots in the breasts of thousands. And unless the indignation of the higher public, or the too long slumbering arm of the executive interfere, we may soon see the tragedy of the last year re-enacted on a vaster scale by a fresh irruption of United States ruffians upon the unhappy fields of South America. If we must have for our own that country, so wretched with misrule, so rich in array of tropical splendors, so neglected and undeveloped, — how much better to win its voluntary entrance, State after State, into our Union, by the overpowering attraction of an example of universal liberty, justice, peace and happiness, than to harass it by sallies of brigands, who track every step of their way with pillage and murder! Let superior advantages of stable rule, freedom and prosperity, be plainly attainable from annexation to us, and Central America may be drawn to us, and absorbed, by her own desire. But gangs of outlaws, robbing and claiming by sheer crime and force, will hardly add any more to our territory than they will to our reputation. If henceforward we could so quicken the moral senti-

ments and sanctify the will of the nation as to curb its rampant pride, prevent fillibustering, and avoid war, we should escape one of our greatest dangers,—an easily besetting danger, which has proved the downfall of many a powerful people before us.

The next palpable danger of our country is from the prevalence of egotistic demagogues, who crave notoriety and spoils, but care not for principle, for the honor of the nation, or for the good of the world. Such a style of character is apt to appear in leaders and aspirants among a constituency whose ignorance and coarseness, taken with low qualities, make idols of the mere declaimer and braggadocio. This evil is fearfully rife in many parts of the land, and thoughtful men must put forth strenuous efforts against it; for when the voters, through crudeness of mind and degradation of feeling, select for their offices the showy sophists and rough champions who cater to their prejudices and wheedle their simplicity, then peril is imminent. Between the vile example of immorality and insubordination set by those in high places, and the mobocratic spirit in the sovereign herd below, what can be expected but pitched battles between rival claimants for the functions of favoritism and the emoluments of patronage, and the summary execution of its own behests by every excited multitude? Herein lies the deadliest foe to a democracy. And when a public

functionary, from sinister motives of rewarding partisan service foully rendered, gives an office to a brutal bully, — be he the mayor of a city appointing a policeman, or the President of the United States appointing a marshal,— he insults the majesty of his prerogative, disgraces himself, and should be smitten with popular disapprobation. Whoever in any degree or manner helps to keep alive and pamper the spirit of bludgeonry, is the worst curse of his country. Under republican institutions, where equal law has its way, where the free ballot-box can swiftly end any grievance, and establish any right, a resort to insurrectionary violence is inexcusable. Whoever, therefore, incites a mob is guilty of the most aggravated offence possible to a citizen. There is no telling where the evil will stop. Every ringleader in such an outbreak deserves instantly to have a bullet in his brain.

General culture is the solid foundation beneath free institutions, the guardian wall around them, and the high watchtower upon them; because, where educated intellect and refined sentiment are prominent traits in electors, they quickly discriminate between the philanthropic statesman who is to be revered and followed, and the reckless adventurer who would welcome in any form an eruption of the worst passions of the populace, hoping in the confusion to snatch the reins of notoriety, and ride into power;— between the demagogue who

flatters and cajoles the people, making use of them to compass his own ends, and the patriot who disinterestedly seeks, by reason and right alone, to enhance the welfare of his countrymen. They accordingly take good care to secure for their leaders, teachers, and rulers, men of enlarged views, elevated principles, peaceful spirit, honest and generous policy. The eagle is the national symbol, common both to our demagogues and patriots. By stigmatizing every appearance of the demagogue spirit, and applauding every manifestation of genuine patriotism, let us see that our country be truly represented, not by the imperious fierceness of that majestic bird, but by his royal courage; not by his talons and beak, that drip with the blood of the lamb and the sparrow, but by his eye, that never blenches in the blazing beams, and his wing, that outwears the tug of the tempest and sails above the thunder.

For the healthy state and administration of affairs in a democratic country, it should be found that the common sentiment is formed and guided by the wisest and best, from above the level, — not by the most conceited and unprincipled, from below it. Scholars, divines, civilians, statesmen, authors, — the most competent students of subjects, — those whose lives are devoted to moral and intellectual pursuits, in their several spheres, should try to correct and lead, not echo and

flatter, public opinion. It is alike shameful and alarming that the press, the pulpit, the forum, are so often occupied by men who, either from want of mind, or from selfish and cowardly subserviency, do not *give* the direction which is needed, but *take* that which suits the majority. Every man in a public post who falls in with this common meanness and evil, should be hissed from his place, to make way for one of nobler aim and sterner stuff. In this respect it seems as if there were a growing degeneracy among us. Have we not editors, who form no opinion of their own, or, forming one, never stand by it? Clergymen, who say a man need not follow his sense of right? Representatives, who make speeches of hollow fustian, cast votes for unqualified infamy, diversify the tedium of Congress by the interpolation of drunken brawls, and profane the steps of the capitol with murderous assaults? Upon their debauched brows a nation's scorn should be branded while they live, and out of their avoided graves, when they die, nightshade should grow. The indifference of a large part of our population to the character and fitness of the men they elevate to stations of trust and power is wicked and insane. Its consequences may at any time plunge us headlong into the flaming abyss of civil strife, or the jaws of foreign war. Verily a new proclamation is wanted in our national hustings, of what are the first rudiments

of morality, manliness, and merit; affirming in every ear and conscience,— what appears not to be understood,— that the true qualifications for office are not drunkenness, pugilism, licentiousness, and bribery; but virtue, intelligence, loyalty, experience, and patriotism.

Another danger to which we are exposed is from the craft and ambition of the priestly spirit, claiming that its ritual holds the exclusive means of salvation, and that its head is vested with supreme authority. We have among us, powerless at present, but diligent, selfish, and arrogant as ever behind its seeming meekness, sleeplessly biding the time when it may unsheath its weapons, and assume total supervision of school, pulpit, and press, and make the State its supple instrument,— that priesthood, which, wherever it goes, still preserves its denationalized unity, paying fealty to one celibate old man; remaining always a separate body in the midst of the people; seeking its own corporate ends at the expense of everything else. Romanism is as much a grasping political, as it is an irresponsible spiritual, power. Flourishing best among a people characterized by superstitious puerility of thought and abject dependence of condition, it establishes eternal ignorance and beggardom that it may possess eternal dominion. Its unearthly pretensions and persecuting mind necessarily make it an enemy to

the genius of republican institutions; and it must at any cost be kept from seizing here those coveted privileges which it so tyrannically exercises in Catholic countries. Could the prisons of the Papacy this day burst, and show their contents to the light, America would stand aghast at the cruelty, and oppose, with leagued conscience and heart, the insinuating advances of so fell a power. If it had authoritative sway, no Protestant teacher or author would for a day be allowed to exercise his functions unmolested, nor could the secular government ever be free from its intrigues and assumptions. It has boasted that the Pope shall yet set up his chair on the Rocky Mountains, and it will spare no pains to compass that fond consummation. Its propagandist zeal flits from the damp mould of mediæval vaults, and hangs over the open nest of America, in the democratic sunlight of the nineteenth century, dripping sacerdotal poison on our young eaglets. Let care be taken that neither the papal, nor any other hierarchical priesthood, ever obtains power on these shores to apply the rack and fagot, which are the legitimate contents equally of its faith, its logic, and its spirit.

But such are the elastic strength and remedial vitality of our national organism, — such are the conspiring agencies of providential destiny combined to neutralize the hurts and shocks, and aid the victorious



course, of this country, — so irresistibly do our palpable interests, as well as our solemn duties, plead for a policy of internal development by the arts of peaceful industry, casting discredit on the crimson lures of conquest, — so spontaneously do the affairs of our thrifty and energetic people prosper, whether fostered or neglected by legislation. — so smoothly do the wheels of our governmental mechanism run and achieve its functions, easily recovering from any friction or strain resulting from the carelessness or rashness of unfit overseers, — such a tremendous check and healing power for the abuse and damage inflicted by demagogues and traitors, exist in the limited prerogatives and brief tenure of our officials, and in their condign dependence on public opinion and the electoral urn, — and so rootedly averse is the whole genius and operation of our institutions to the domination of a priestly hierarchy, whose history is hateful to the mind of democracy, whose antiquated dogmas, formalism, and haughtiness are irreconcilable with the fresh thought, practical taste, and social generosity of our people, — that America might laugh to scorn all the evils threatened by her irritable pride, by her army of selfish politicians every four years clamorously knocking at the official doors, as if they were inscribed, “Ask, and ye shall receive,” and by the determined encroachments of sacerdotal ambition, — did not that fearful curse and danger, the problem

of slavery, lower over the land, the prodigious horrors its bosom holds, big with portents of explosion, the rasping hostilities its relationship engenders, charging the atmosphere with angry lightnings of debate.

For three-quarters of a century, the Constitution has re-enacted for America the part of Amphion, to whose charmed strain the spontaneous stones moved and built the capital of Bœotia. To the music of the Union, our more than Theban walls have been rising, and are rapidly building still. On this, the anniversary day of the first triumphant prelude of that edifying music, it were a delightful privilege, if we might, for one hallowed hour, forget every later alienation, turn from every unwelcome sight, listen not to a single dissonant note, but revive the old concord that made our Fathers one, and let the souls of our people, from the lumberers of Aroostook to the miners of Mariposa, all flow together in common memories, loyalties, and hopes. Alas, that patriotism, honor, and religion should unite to dispel the vision and forbid the dream.

The fierce clamor of the slaveholding interest for more room, fresh prey, new chains, and whips, and a longer lease of power, drowns the voices of the Revolutionary Fathers, vilifies the Declaration of Independence, incenses the country, disgraces the age, and insults the world. The madness of these retrograde fanatics, facing directly into barbaric night, seriously

threatens the disruption of our Union, the extinguishment of the world's latest, brightest expectations. This is no exaggeration. The infinite wrong the institution of slavery is in itself; the inexpressible wrongs it inflicts on its victims; the insulting arrogance it breeds, the deteriorating sloth it pampers, the loathsome lust it inflames and feeds, in the master; the generous sympathies and moral sentiments it outrages in the contemplator;—all these facts are necessarily fraught with the combustible elements of strife. Besides, the want of educational institutions, of high culture, of diffused skill and enterprise—a want obviously attendant on Slavery—naturally leads to exhaustion of the soil, decay of wealth, and decrease of society, where it is long established, and so force it to seek new territory. The North and the West, by their comparative enlightenment, liberty, and progressive thrift are girding the South as with a ring of sacred fire. She must either get new life and land in Nebraska, Cuba, South America, or die of inanition. The clutch on this resource by the Slave States is not more tenacious than the opposition by the Free States to such a seizure, is resolute. The contest between the obstinacy and aristocratic passions on one side, the firm convictions and clear lights on the other, is grave already, and more ominous ahead.

Under these circumstances, appointed to speak on

the Fourth of July, to the citizens of Boston, I should deem myself a recreant son of old Massachusetts, guilty of a contemptible trick of cowardice, — the blood of the Fifth of March, 1770, would cry against me from the pavement of yonder street, — did I, while treating of our exposures, evade, through fear of touching a delicate subject, a frank reference to the chiefest evil and alarm of the land. That ostrich-policy, which, amidst thickening sounds of combat and signs of dissolution, hides the head in sandy generalities, and, quietly ignoring the facts, babbles of peace and union, is neither manly nor useful. Far nobler is it, and better, to open the eyes, summon intellect, heart, and conscience to their work, and submit your conclusions with direct candor to the wholesome agitation of criticism and argument.

One thing, then, is as sure as the footsteps of destiny, namely, that the battle between Slavery and Freedom in America is irreconcilable. One of the parties must triumph, and one must yield. Which it shall be, and how soon, — there all the question lies.

There are four conceivable modes of action, one of which must be followed, and we may take our choice. First: If the Slave States would, as every truth in sound policy, as all calm and devout wisdom, requires, seek, in union with the Free States, by any feasible means, to deliver themselves and the country from the

wretched misfortune of negro bondage, we might honorably co-operate with them, and bear a generous portion of the pecuniary burden and of the tutoring responsibility. Would to Heaven that might be! But plainly it cannot be at present. Judicial delusion and exasperated obstinacy prevent it. It can come only, if at all, when accumulated defeat, perplexity, pecuniary ruin and social peril leave the infatuated, baffled oppressors no other door of relief.

Secondly: If the Slave States, confessing the institution to be an unhappy accident, a pernicious mistake, and its removal a desirable consummation, would let it be limited to its present domain, with no effort to fortify or to spread it, honestly allowing it to gradually ameliorate and diminish before the light of a higher polity, and under the influence of natural causes, the purer instincts of men, the laws of political economy, and the requirements of righteousness,—we might justifiably consent, standing on the provisions of the Constitution, to compromise so far as to wait patiently the time of its legitimate surcease. But how clear it is that in their frenzy they will do no such thing! Under a perturbed judgment, they are, for the first time, asserting the divine right and benignity of slaveholding, identifying their total welfare with its continuance, and devoting their entire energies to its diffusion. Day and night they are plotting for new

fields, and devising new intrenchments. Within the year, with incredible impudence and piratical *animus*, they have clamored on the floor of Congress, for the legalized reopening of the African slave-trade, — the most unrelieved system of robbery, murder, and oppression ever revealed in history. Affirming the sectionalism of Freedom, and the nationality of Slavery, they insist on our complicity with them, commanding us to serve as dogs to hunt and return their panting fugitives. Can we endure this, and sit tamely down and do nothing to stay the advance of the all-grasping despotism? No! It is hard enough to leave the evil alone where it is, until what time its unnourished being might end. But when its supporters demand more of us than that, they ask too much. We cannot let it tramp over its sectional bounds with obscene hoof to befoul the fountain heads of new States, and roil the silver spring where our national eagle drinks.

Thirdly: If the Slave States be suffered to retain the preponderant shaping power which their single-aiming persistency has given them in the Government, and to carry their policy through, concentrating the life-passion and stake of the country in Slavery, why then America will inevitably be plunged into the lowest pit of infamy, and thence into bottomless ruin. Demoralization, poverty, hostility, and contempt from abroad, war, and at last, black destruction, will be

unavoidable consequents. On the other hand, if we, while refusing to submit and go with them, *permit them* in their selfish revulsion to withdraw from the Union and set up a separate confederacy, a great Slave Empire covering the southern half of the continent, the terrible crisis will not thereby be averted. The conflicting ideas, interests, sentiments of North and South will then be vastly aggravated, and present restraints no longer be felt. Dislikes will be fomented, jealousies rankle, quarrels occur, and fraternal slaughter unquestionably close the day.

Fourthly: There remains, therefore, but one course for the Free States to follow, and in that course interest and duty blend their parallel lines to form a plain path. We must rally in our might at the ballot-box, and assume that controlling power in the National Government which properly belongs to us. On the basis of the Constitution, in the spirit of the Fathers, we must organize a party animated by the American ideas of democratic liberty and progress, to take the legitimate supervision of our public policy, and to mould our legislation in such a way as to secure the strict confinement of Slavery to its present possessions, and so to provide for its final abolition. Such a party can be formed in a magnanimous spirit of justice and kindness to all, equally generous to the slaveholder, considerate to humanity, and loyal to God. Its first

victory will carry the Declaration of Independence into the sky of the Supreme Court, where each one of its "glittering generalities" will be a bright particular star to guide the oppressed out of their bondage. The Free States are simply called on to unite in one grand party of righteous sentiment, take lawful possession of the executive power, and direct the future conduct of the country. This power is our right by the democratic rule of majorities, and we have been bullied out of it too long; for the free voters outnumber the slaveholders: ten to one. To wield it is also our duty, because our civilization is higher, our temper purer, than theirs: and the superior ought to govern the inferior. *We* contend by argument, example and persuasion; *they*, by knife, pistol, and mob. When we are lifting our marble martyr to his niche on Bunker Hill, the odious slaveholder who forced the Fugitive Slave Bill down our throats, is introduced with complimentary *flunkeyism*, in the very shadow of the awful place, and we listen to his haughty-toned commonplaces with respectful patience; *they* will not permit a harmless private abolitionist, known to be such, to enter one of their villages, except at the imminent risk of outrage and death; and notoriously there is hardly a slaveholding community in the country where a free word in public on this subject will not raise a mob to hang the speaker on the nearest tree!



Furthermore, the Free States are obligated to rouse and conjoin their forces to snatch the office of the National Executive from the slaveholding oligarchy, because otherwise the doom of the Republic is sealed: for lasting peace and safety are wholly impossible, except in the triumph of right and liberty. Then they will be secured; for we can, if we will, easily wield the prerogatives of a ruling majority, and execute the behests of just principles with a high right arm. And it is the only way to save the country. If we unitedly resolve on it, the South will be as impotent to resist right and wise measures, as we shall be able to enforce them,—as helpless to destroy, as we shall be competent to preserve, the Union, and to punish every attempt to thwart its great ends. Our duty, accordingly, in relation to Slavery, is, by consolidated voting, to shut it within its jail-limits, and cut off its nutriment. Then it will die, and we shall stand justified. If we do not this, we shall deserve to become a byword and a hissing forever.

America is at once the oldest and the youngest of nations. Inheriting the experience of the past, the ages of foregone countries are to be added to hers to date her true longevity. Just started on her career, the first throbbing glow of promise and ambition in her veins, with fuller knowledge, with new elements of success, and under more auspicious conditions than

any country ever enjoyed before, humanity and the world watch, with unprecedented intensity of interest, the incidents of her course and the goal of her destination. Shall her children fail her now? Will they not see to it that she is represented before the nations in a manner worthy of her peerless endowment and her providential mission? Let not America appear, in genius and posture, a booted and spurred Fillibuster, in tawdry uniform and bristling with weapons; not a propagandist Slave-driver, with slouched garb and furious mien, a whip in one hand, a bowie-knife in the other, the hated renegade of the world; but a virgin Goddess, newly descended on the summits, olive and sheaf in her grasp, love and futurity in her eye, celestial wisdom on her brow, and the hemisphere at her feet.

If all warning omens be neglected, and our really good and able men stand back, refraining from their proper place and part in public affairs, and demagogues and mobs rule, and fanatics feed their bale-fires, and the war-spirit be nourished, and a foreign clergy carry out their plans, and it be attempted to enlarge and eternize the organic injustice and excitement of Slavery, — then, just so surely as human nature remains what it always has been, fatal alienations will spring up, public sentiment will be demoralized, and passion will be embittered, till some earthquake of party madness

yawns for our fabricated strength, or some volcanic insurrection overwhelms the scene in a deluge of fire and blood. There are lessons for us of this sort in the shuddering annals of the past, which I need not draw; and portents of dreadful note for us in the dilating controversies and corruption of the present, which I will not describe; because there are also fair prospects for us in the promising possibilities of the future, to which I eagerly turn, to close in a tone of cheer more befitting this festive day.

There is, I believe, a better fate in store for us and our children, than that prophesied by the lugubrious croakers of the time. The day brightens above Kansas. Conscientious citizens are arousing to their duties. The moderates — the golden party of reason, justice, and liberty — will overbalance the fevered extremists of both sections, and rally a majority around the genuine mission of our country, inspired with love and resolve to defend from every enemy, within and without, the cause of free self-government, the precious legacy inherited from all the ages gone, and now jeopardized here in this pass of the world. It is in the power of that party, within the present generation, to shape for this continent the stupendous issues of the future; and they are trying to do it. Be their numbers reinforced, their zeal augmented. Go, all faithful men, to their

side, and labor with heart and hand to conform your country's laws and policy to the ideal standard of domestic righteousness and universal fraternity. Looking about your broad home-borders, say to Slavery, Intemperance, Ignorance, and the various shapes of Sensualism and Sin,—Avaunt! fell Fiends, horrible forms of Crime and Woe, brooding Threats, begone from our coasts! Then, gazing across the sea, exclaim with open mien and frank voice —

“Though dwelling in a far-off isle,  
 We bear no hate to other lands,  
 But think that all the earth might smile  
 If they and we but joined our hands.”

Let that spirit be cultivated and that work be pursued by the mass of the American people, and year after year the results will be seen in the diminution of the evils which now so sadly qualify our honor and our influence, and in the purification from all its stains of that banner of stripes and stars, whose solemn and splendid folds, streaming from the central mountains, shall yet be reflected at once in the girdling waters of the North, the East, the South, and the West, — when this entire continent, untrod by the foot of a slave, unprofaned by the throne of a tyrant, unshadowed by the mitre of a priest, shall be one united nation, powerful enough to overawe the world in arms, virtuous enough to keep the cardinal laws of God in peace, generous

enough to win the grateful love of foreign empires, wise enough to insure the perpetuity of its own bounteous prosperity to the crowding generations which shall successively flourish on its soil and migrate to its sky.











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